Exploring Sexual and Gender Diversity

2017 Student Advocacy Services
Summer Conference

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Sexual and Gender Diversity Demographics

- **Current estimates** (UCLA Williams Law Institute, 2011)
  - 3.8% of Americans are LGBT = 9 million individuals
  - 25.6 million Americans (11%) acknowledge at least some same-sex sexual attraction

- **2013 and 2015 Gallup Research**
  - 2.7% of Utah population identifies as LGBT
  - = approximately 81,000 LGBT individuals in Utah
  - 4.7 percent of Salt Lake City residents self-identify as LGBT
    - (San Francisco = 6.2%)
  - Salt Lake City has 7th highest % of LGBT residents for 50 top metro areas in US

Possible Flaws in Demographics

Sexual and Gender Diversity

- Confusion and inconsistencies reflected in data collection
- Shifting definitions of what it means to be LGBT
- Inconsistent survey questions
- Fear of participant disclosures
- Politicization of research and researchers
Changing Paradigms
Sexual and/or Gender Diversity

- Non-Binary
- Spectrum
- Intersection of Sexuality and Gender
- Minority Identity Stress

...Important factors for engaging with contemporary youth

Sexual and Gender Diversity
Awareness - Expression - Identity

...may not be congruent or integrated

Challenging
Binary/Traditional Construct of Gender

Birth ritual
...divide humans into one of only two categories based on perceived anatomy and physiology

Gender
...thereafter often treated as synonymous with “biological sex”

Intersex

...medical condition for a person born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy not fitting typical definitions of female or male

Estimated that between 1.7 and 4% of the world population is intersex
(Source: Haas, 2004)

= upwards of 280 million people living in the world today (based on worldwide population total of 7 billion)
Limiting gender to dual choices of male or female, is a human construct unnatural and contrived.

Sexuality and Gender more realistically exist as spectrums.

Sexuality and Gender are represented by a spectrum of identities vs. limited to the binary choices of: straight-gay, male-female, masculine-feminine.

Sexuality & Gender...sometimes overlap or intersect.

Therefore, sexual identity and gender identity are not necessarily bifurcated and exclusionary.
...“How many gender choices are currently available on FaceBook?”

Intersection of Homelessness and Sexual and Gender Diversity

- In 2014, it is estimated that 13,621 persons experienced homelessness in Utah.
- Youth between the ages of 18 and 24 make up 6.7 percent of the total homeless population in Utah.
  - 913 homeless youth in Utah.
- Between 20-40% of homeless youth identify as LGBT.
  - 183-365 homeless LGBT youth in Utah.

Intersection of Sexual Trauma and Sexual/Gender Diversity

- Sexual and Gender Diverse individuals are at increased risk for sexual victimization.
- However, sexual trauma does not cause sexual and/or gender diversity.
2010 National Intimate Partner & Sexual Violence Survey (Center for Disease Control, 2013)

...26% of gay men and 37% of bisexual men experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime

...40% of gay men and nearly 50% of bisexual men had experienced sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime, compared to 21% of heterosexual men

National Transgender Discrimination Survey (2011)
(Interviews with 6450 transgender or gender non-conforming adults)

...15% of respondents reported being sexually assaulted while in prison

...22% of respondents reported being sexually assaulted by residents or staff while in homeless shelters

Youth Suicide Intersection with Sexual/Gender Diversity

➢ LGB youth are 4 times more likely, and questioning youth are 3 times more likely, to attempt suicide as their straight peers

➢ Suicide attempts by LGBTQ youth are 4 - 6 times more likely to require medical intervention when compared with straight peers

Trevor Project: CDC, 2011

Youth Suicide Intersection with Sexual/Gender Diversity

➢ Each episode of LGBT victimization, such as physical or verbal harassment or abuse, increases the likelihood of self-harming behavior by 2.5 times on average
➢ Trevor Project: IMPACT (2010)

➢ LGB youth are 8.4 times as likely to have attempted suicide if they come from highly rejecting families as compared with LGB peers who report no or low levels of family rejection
➢ Family Acceptance Project
Suicide: An Epidemic For Transgender Youth

Nearly 50% of transgender youth have seriously considered suicide and 25% report have made at least one suicide attempt.


Youth Suicide in Utah

- Youth suicides have TRIPLED between 2012 - 2014
  - 2007 = 3.0 per 100,000
  - 2014 = 8.5 per 100,000
- Two youth are treated for suicide attempts every day in Utah
- Suicide is now the 3rd leading cause of death among 10-17 years old in Utah
- Youth ages 10 to 17
  - 13.0% of the Utah population,
  - 5.1% of all suicides
  - 22.7% of all suicide attempts
- Source: Utah’s Indicator Based Information System for Public Health (IBIS-PH)

Increased Risks for Suicidality

Inability of youth who are sexually or gender diverse to...
- ...be authentic about their identity
- ...talk openly about their identity confusions
- ...share openly when they perceive harassment

Protracted minority identity stress is experienced as trauma and increases risk factors for self-harm.

Very few states have nondiscrimination legal protections for sexual and/gender diverse youth.
Few states have anti-bullying laws

Utah does not have clear legal protections about bullying. Hate Crimes Law does not mention hatred, bias, or prejudice based on special characteristics such as sexuality and gender.

7 States have education laws that expressly forbid teachers from discussing gay and transgender issues.

The “No Homo Promo Law” in Utah was rescinded in 2017 Legislative session.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Nationwide Survey from Centers for Disease Control

- States allowed option to include question: “Which of the following best describes you?” with answers including heterosexual (straight), gay or lesbian, bisexual or unsure.
- Utah Department of Health proposed (2016) inclusion of this survey question for high school students.
- Inclusion blocked due to objections from several major School Districts.

Family Acceptance Project Research

San Francisco State University

Rejecting Behaviors:
- Verbal harassment, name-calling, or physical hurting because of a child’s LGBT identity
- Excluding LGBT youth from family and family activities
- Blocking access to LGBT friends, events and resources
- Blaming a child when they are discriminated against or have negative experiences because of their LGBT identity
- Pressuring a child to be more (or less) masculine or feminine
- Telling a child that God will punish them because they are LGBT
- Telling a child that you are ashamed of them or that how they look or act will shame the family
- Preventing or not allowing a child to talk about their LGBT identity
Family Acceptance Project Research

Accepting Behaviors
- Talk with and listen respectfully to a child about their LGBT identity
- Express affection and support a child when they tell you or when you learn that they are LGBT
- Support a child even when you may feel uncomfortable
- Advocate for a child when they are mistreated because of their LGBT identity
  - Require that others respect the LGBT child
  - Tell a child you love them unconditionally
  - Welcome a child’s LGBT friends
  - Support a child’s gender expression
  - Stand up for a child to prevent address bullying & harassment
  - Believe an LGBT child can have a happy future

Guild Mission Statement
- Promote the improvement of mental health services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning individuals and their relationships.
- Create an active network among LGBTQ-affirmative mental-health professionals and students in Utah for purposes of our own empowerment, education, & professional growth.
- Enhance referral and information resources for those seeking mental-health services related to LGBTQ concerns.
- Maintain our professional responsibilities to multicultural competence by embracing a commitment to:
  - Speak out against inaccurate and harmful information of LGBTQ individuals, their lives, & their relationships and
  - Take an active role in guaranteeing an affirmative environment for LGBT individuals and their families.

LGBTQ-Affirmative Psychotherapist Guild of Utah

www.lgbtqtherapists.com
Power of Collaborative Dialogue With Adversaries

Reconciliation and Growth

...Balancing matters of sexual and gender diversity within the realities of ideological and spiritual differences

www/reconciliationandgrowth.org

Ethical Principles and Practices

- **A Call to Action**
  - Move beyond adversarial strategies of debates, polarization, exclusion, legislation, and litigation
  - Create bridges for collaborative engagement and respectful dialogues with “the other”

- Two core ethical principles
  - Facilitate self-determination
  - Do no harm

Thank you